

# Breaking Down the

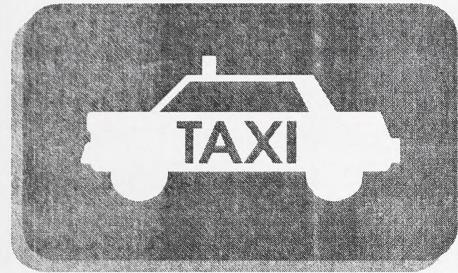
# BARRIERS

Alberta Transportation

March 2001

## Edmonton Accessible Taxis

*Update*



A Steering Committee formed by the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Taxi Commission has developed a strategy for a viable accessible taxi service in the Edmonton area.

Alberta Transportation has been providing support and information on an as-needed basis.

This initiative follows a preliminary recommendation by staff of the Alberta Human Rights Citizenship Commission (AHRCC) that ways of restoring this service be examined by March 2001.

The Steering Committee has consulted with consumers, taxi industry, businesses, and various government organizations.

The strategy was presented to the City's Transportation and Public Works Committee on February 27, 2001. The following motion was approved:

"That the February 20, 2001 Transportation and Streets Department report be received for information.

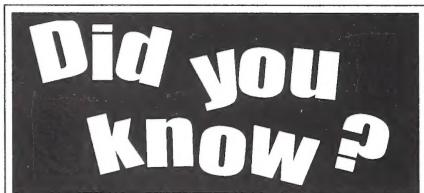
That this matter be referred back to the Administration and the Edmonton Taxi Cab Commission to prepare a report on:

1. The costs of providing accessible taxi service, as set out in the February 20, 2001 Transportation and Streets Department report;
2. The cost implications of providing the service through DATS;
3. The identification of any other funding or arrangements for provision of the service; and
4. The inclusion of an estimate of the potential demand for accessible taxi service.”

The report is due May 1, 2001. In the meantime, a response will be sent from the City to the AHRCC.

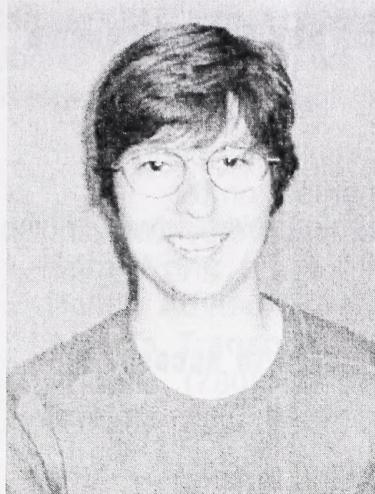
For more information, please contact:

**Dennis Nowicki**  
**Director, DATS**  
**Edmonton Transit System**  
**Phone: (780) 496-4553**  
**E-Mail: Dennis.Nowicki@gov.edmonton.ab.ca**



Alberta Transportation continues to advance the Parking Placards for Persons with Disabilities Policy review. Currently, it is working with stakeholders to develop an education/awareness campaign. The Department expects to have a final policy ready for implementation in spring or summer of this year.





# **Profile – Member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation**

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**Name: Arista Haas**

**Occupation: Transportation Analyst,  
Transport Canada**

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## **1. How did you become interested in transportation issues?**

I became interested in transportation issues when I was at the University of Alberta. I was in my fourth year of studies when I joined the Accessibility Advisory Committee, chaired by a Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS) staff member. Before I became involved, I noticed a vehicle parked in either a drop-off zone or a designated parking stall that hindered someone from getting to a class on time. That was one of the main reasons I joined the committee.

Progress has been made steadily since I graduated from the University. Currently, the Accessibility Advisory Committee consists of a chairperson, a director (usually from SSDS), and students and staff with disabilities. The goal of the committee is to improve accessibility and safety on campus for people with disabilities. The main concern is to create a safe and accessible environment in all drop-off/pick-up zones for DATS (Disabled Adult Transit Service) and designated parking stalls.



Who could have known that I would end up working for Transport Canada, after I finished my studies at the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Commerce in December 1998?

## **2. What is your role on the Barrier Free Committee and why did you become involved?**

The federal government has a role in accessible transportation for people with disabilities. Transport Canada serves as an ex-officio member on the committee because it is valuable to provide a federal perspective by attending the meetings.

## **3. What are the major concerns or issues you have related to accessible transportation?**

The major issue is that services provided or regulated by the federal government, must be accessible to all. Accessible transportation is essential to serve the needs of persons with disabilities.

The Canada Transportation Act underlines the Government of Canada's commitment to equitable access to transportation services by all travellers.

Under the act, the Canadian Transportation Agency has the power to remove "undue obstacles" from much of Canada's transportation network, including air carriers and airports, passenger rail carriers and stations, and interprovincial ferry services and their terminals.

## **Highway Signage Project**

Alberta Transportation has funded a study examining accessibility symbols (i.e., hearing, cane and wheelchair) on highway signs. A review of other jurisdictions' policies on this matter has been conducted and criteria will be developed on what symbols should be used and how they should be displayed.

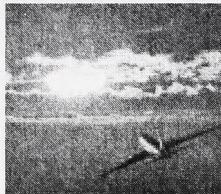
In addition, six cities and tourist areas in Canada have been examined to determine if any accessible signage policies exist, and how they are implemented at the local level.

The results of the study will be provided to the Transportation Association of

Canada (TAC), an organization that develops uniform traffic symbols and signs. Alberta Transportation will be requesting that TAC include accessibility symbols on highway signs through a formal standard.

For more information, please contact:

**Sara Wong**  
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**Alberta Transportation**  
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## **Future of Canada's Transportation System under Review**

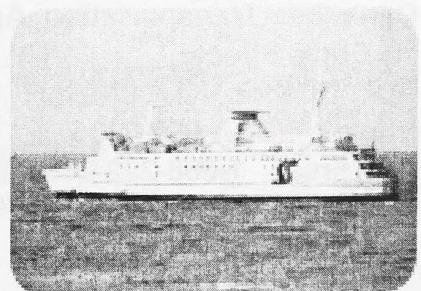
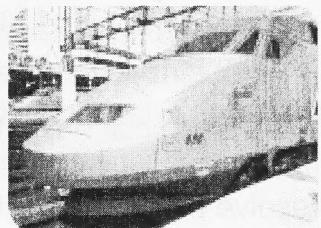
The future direction of Canada's transportation system is being reviewed by a Panel appointed by the federal Minister of Transport.



Alberta Transportation has prepared a comprehensive Position Paper on behalf of the Government of Alberta. Where services for persons with disabilities are concerned, the Paper advocates that the federal government prepare, in concert with stakeholders, a national accessibility policy, and

enshrine in legislation the right of persons with disabilities to bring along a bona fide attendant, free of charge, on all modes under federal jurisdiction.

At this time, intercity bus and rail carriers are doing this voluntarily while airlines provide only a 50% discount.



For a copy of Alberta's Position Paper, please visit Alberta Transportation's website at <http://www.infras.gov.ab.ca>.

For further information, contact:

**Peter Dawes**  
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**E-mail: peter.dawes@gov.ab.ca**



## **Canadian Transportation Agency: Mediation Pilot Project**

The Canadian Transportation Agency has launched a pilot project offering mediation services for parties involved in transportation disputes and complaints arising from the Canada Transportation Act. This includes any transportation accessibility issues that persons with disabilities may have in modes of transport under federal jurisdiction.

A quasi-judicial body, the Agency's mandate includes resolving various transportation disputes and complaints. The Agency's goal is to help parties resolve their disputes through mediation as an alternative to a more formal adjudicative process.

For more information, please contact:

**Rail and Marine Branch**  
**Canadian Transportation Agency**  
**15 Eddy Street**  
**Hull, Quebec K1A 0N9**  
**Phone: (819) 997-2036**  
**Toll Free: 1-888-222-2592**  
**E-mail: mediation.transpo@cta-otc.x400.gc.ca**



# Disabled Parking Awareness Day in Calgary and Edmonton

Mayor Al Duerr launched the second Disabled Parking Awareness campaign in Calgary on December 6, 2000. Mayor Duerr and the Calgary Parking Authority reminded Calgarians that persons with disabilities have special parking needs throughout the year and particularly during the hectic holiday season. Designated stalls are a necessity, not a privilege for persons with disabilities.

On November 29, 2000 the City of Edmonton launched its first Disabled Parking Awareness Day campaign. Raising awareness is the key to ensuring that those with the great needs have access to the designated stalls when they need them.

"The Calgary Parking Authority wants to stress the importance of leaving the designated stalls to those who really need them," said General Manager Dale Fraser. "We hope to reduce the abuse of these stalls through public awareness rather than enforcement. The Calgary Parking Authority believes that 'voluntary compliance' through public awareness is preferable to ticketing whenever possible."

During the Christmas season, both cities ask parking enforcement officers to pay special attention to vehicles parked in designated stalls to see that they display the appropriate placard or license. The fine for parking in a designated stall is \$150 and the vehicle may be impounded. It is also illegal to park in a designated bus or passenger loading zone.



The top three excuses of drivers who are fined for parking in designated stalls are:

1. 'I was only parking for a minute.'
2. 'I didn't see the sign.'
3. 'There are still lots of open stalls available, I didn't take the last one.'

Private property owners and operators are becoming more aware of the parking needs of all their customers and are designating more signed and marked stalls. Each year more private property owners are requesting help from the cities to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the stalls designated for them. In addition, the public is becoming less tolerant of people taking advantage of designated stalls when not entitled. The number of parking tags issued is increasing in response to this awareness.

Placard holders are also encouraged to use these stalls appropriately. Allowing a relative or friend to take advantage of a designated parking placard means someone who needs the spot may be unable to park. Placards are issued to a person, not a vehicle.

For more information, please contact:

**Joan Hickie**  
**Calgary Parking Authority**  
Phone: (403) 537-7099  
E-mail: [joan.hickie@calgaryparking.com](mailto:joan.hickie@calgaryparking.com)

## We have a long way to go !

Sometimes, improving accessibility can be a discouraging task. Witness an article in the March 6, 2001 issue of the Globe and Mail describing the state of Toronto's current bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games. Politicians apparently are being criticised for being "entangled in details and correctness – such as wheelchair access for stadiums".

There is a long way to go in raising awareness about the needs of persons with disabilities.

# **Building Accessibility Study**

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Alberta Transportation has recently completed an internal review of its accessibility policies for government owned or supported buildings.

The "path" between exiting transportation services and entering each building was a key aspect examined.

The results indicate the need for a comprehensive policy statement and checklist to guide policy makers and planners on building accessibility issues.

In the next few months, an Inter-departmental Action Group on Accessibility will be preparing a policy statement and checklist for consideration by all Government of Alberta departments. Policy makers and planners will be encouraged to utilize these documents when planning new construction or renovation/upgrade projects.

For more information, please contact:

**Sara Wong**

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**Phone: (780) 427-9781**

**E-mail: sara.wong@gov.ab.ca**



## **Did you know?**

Recent building accessibility renovations at the J.E. Brownlee Building in Edmonton have been completed. Automatic/power-operated door openers have been installed on all main floor passage doors. In addition, brailled elevator buttons have been added to assist the visually impaired.



# Our doors are open to all.

To Greyhound Canada, the concept of making our buses rider-friendly to everyone is a constant work in progress.

We are continually searching for ways to make it easier, particularly for disabled persons, to enjoy the grandeur of Canada.

In addition, we are fortunate to have several persons with disabilities amongst our employees. Their input is highly valued, and we find their abilities far outweigh their disabilities.

We are honoured to have been selected to receive the Corporate Award by the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons.



For more information, please contact:

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**Greyhound Canada**

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**E-Mail: lorraine\_card@lpsc.com**

# **Canada is Hosting the World Congress on Universal Design**

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The World Congress, Inclusion by Design – Planning the Barrier-Free World, will be held June 1 – 5, 2001 in Montreal. Ed Broadbent, Honourary Chairperson of the Congress, stated that the conference “is an international event that challenges us all to think and act from a barrier free perspective.”



Alberta Transportation will be making a presentation on the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation, its achievements and current initiatives.

For further information, please visit the Congress website at [www.ccrw.org](http://www.ccrw.org) or call the Congress Secretariat at (514) 287-1070.

Or contact:

**Sara Wong**  
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**Phone: (780) 427-9781**  
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## **Did you know?**

“On My Own: A Resource Guide for Living Independently”, is now available from the Canadian Abilities Foundation. This handbook provides a helpful guide to youth with disabilities making the transition to living on their own. The book is available by calling (416) 923-1885 or by visiting the website: <http://www.abilities.ca>

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